

(f) Where the State undertakes functions in those programs specifically cited in §25.2(a)(7), the State shall be responsible for meeting the requirements for public participation included in the applicable regulations governing those State programs. The requirements for public participation in State Hazardous Waste Programs, Dredge and Fill Permit programs, Underground Injection Control programs and NPDES permit programs are found in part 123 of this chapter. These regulations embody the substantive requirements of this part.

(g) These regulations apply to the activities of all agencies receiving EPA financial assistance which is awarded after [the effective date of final regulations], and to all other covered activities of EPA, State, interstate, and substate agencies which occur after that date. These regulations will apply to ongoing grants or other covered activities upon any significant change in the activity (for example, upon a significant proposed increase in project scope of a construction grant). Parts 105 (Public Participation in Water Pollution Control) and 249 (Public Participation in Solid Waste Management) will no longer appear in the Code of Federal Regulations; however, they will remain applicable, in uncodified form, to grants awarded prior to the effective date of this part and to all other ongoing activities.

#### § 25.3 Policy and objectives.

(a) EPA, State, interstate, and substate agencies carrying out activities described in §25.2(a) shall provide for, encourage, and assist the participation of the public. The term, "the public" in the broadest sense means the people as a whole, the general populace. There are a number of identifiable "segments of the public" which may have a particular interest in a given program or decision. Interested and affected segments of the public may be affected directly by a decision, either beneficially or adversely; they may be affected indirectly; or they may have some other concern about the decision. In addition to private citizens, the public may include, among others, representatives of consumer, environmental, and minority associations; trade, industrial, agri-

cultural, and labor organizations; public health, scientific, and professional societies; civic associations; public officials; and governmental and educational associations.

(b) Public participation is that part of the decision-making process through which responsible officials become aware of public attitudes by providing ample opportunity for interested and affected parties to communicate their views. Public participation includes providing access to the decision-making process, seeking input from and conducting dialogue with the public, assimilating public viewpoints and preferences, and demonstrating that those viewpoints and preferences have been considered by the decision-making official. Disagreement on significant issues is to be expected among government agencies and the diverse groups interested in and affected by public policy decisions. Public agencies should encourage full presentation of issues at an early stage so that they can be resolved and timely decisions can be made. In the course of this process, responsible officials should make special efforts to encourage and assist participation by citizens representing themselves and by others whose resources and access to decision-making may be relatively limited.

(c) The following are the objectives of EPA, State, interstate, and substate agencies in carrying out activities covered by this part:

(1) To assure that the public has the opportunity to understand official programs and proposed actions, and that the government fully considers the public's concerns;

(2) To assure that the government does not make any significant decision on any activity covered by this part without consulting interested and affected segments of the public;

(3) To assure that government action is as responsive as possible to public concerns;

(4) To encourage public involvement in implementing environmental laws;

(5) To keep the public informed about significant issues and proposed project or program changes as they arise;

(6) To foster a spirit of openness and mutual trust among EPA, States, substate agencies and the public; and

(7) To use all feasible means to create opportunities for public participation, and to stimulate and support participation.

**§ 25.4 Information, notification, and consultation responsibilities.**

(a) *General.* EPA, State, interstate, and substate agencies shall conduct a continuing program for public information and participation in the development and implementation of activities covered by this part. This program shall meet the following requirements:

(b) *Information and assistance requirements.* (1) Providing information to the public is a necessary prerequisite to meaningful, active public involvement. Agencies shall design informational activities to encourage and facilitate the public's participation in all significant decisions covered by § 25.2(a), particularly where alternative courses of action are proposed.

(2) Each agency shall provide the public with continuing policy, program, and technical information and assistance beginning at the earliest practicable time. Informational materials shall highlight significant issues that will be the subject of decision-making. Whenever possible, consistent with applicable statutory requirements, the social, economic, and environmental consequences of proposed decisions shall be clearly stated in such material. Each agency shall identify segments of the public likely to be affected by agency decisions and should consider targeting informational materials toward them (in addition to the materials directed toward the general public). Lengthy documents and complex technical materials that relate to significant decisions should be summarized for public and media uses. Fact sheets, news releases, newsletters, and other similar publications may be used to provide notice that materials are available and to facilitate public understanding of more complex documents, but shall not be a substitute for public access to the full documents.

(3) Each agency shall provide one or more central collections of reports, studies, plans, and other documents relating to controversial issues or significant decisions in a convenient location or locations, for example, in public li-

braries. Examples of such documents are catalogs of documents available from the agency, grant applications, fact sheets on permits and permit applications, permits, effluent discharge information, and compliance schedule reports. Copying facilities at reasonable cost should be available at the depositories.

(4) Whenever possible, agencies shall provide copies of documents of interest to the public free of charge. Charges for copies should not exceed prevailing commercial copying costs. EPA requirements governing charges for information and documents provided to the public in response to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act are set forth in part 2 of this chapter. Consistent with the objectives of § 25.3(b), agencies may reserve their supply of free copies for private citizens and others whose resources are limited.

(5) Each agency shall develop and maintain a list of persons and organizations who have expressed an interest in or may, by the nature of their purposes, activities or members, be affected by or have an interest in any covered activity. Generally, this list will be most useful where subdivided by area of interest or geographic area. Whenever possible, the list should include representatives of the several categories of interests listed under § 25.3(a). Those on the list, or relevant portions if the list is subdivided, shall receive timely and periodic notification of the availability of materials under § 25.4(b)(2).

(c) *Public notification.* Each agency shall notify interested and affected parties, including appropriate portions of the list required by paragraph (b)(5) of this section, and the media in advance of times at which major decisions not covered by notice requirements for public meetings or public hearings are being considered. Generally, notices should include the timetable in which a decision will be reached, the issues under consideration, any alternative courses of action or tentative determinations which the agency has made, a brief listing of the applicable laws or regulations, the location where relevant documents may be reviewed or obtained, identification